

***Iowa Outdoors***  
**Special Edition**  
**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**www.iowadnr.com**

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Survey Says...

**HUNTERS ENCOURAGED TO RETURN DNR QUESTIONNAIRE**

BOONE - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is asking a select group of hunters to return a postcard survey that is used by state wildlife biologists to estimate hunter participation, game population and harvest. This survey is the only method currently available to the DNR and the number of hunters responding to the survey statewide is shrinking nearly 5 percent each year.

“Without this information, we cannot accurately manage our game species and we are at a critical time with our deer population. We need to know if we are reaching our doe harvest goals,” said Steve Roberts, wildlife research biologist with the DNR. “In the past, we have allowed hunters to respond to the survey voluntarily. But if we continue to see fewer and fewer responses, we will be forced to look at other options.”

Those options could include mandatory check stations, phone surveys and telephone reporting. If one of these options is selected, there is a chance that license fees could increase to help offset the cost of collecting the information. There could also be a fine or other penalty for hunters failing to report.

“Clearly, from a cost standpoint and from a convenience standpoint, we prefer to stay with the voluntary postcard survey. But realistically, if we continue down this road of few survey card returns, we have to look at our options,” Roberts said.

Roberts said hunters should fill out and return the cards even if they did not hunt or had gone hunting but did not harvest any game. For the deer survey, he asks that hunters report only the number of their personal tag (s) used on deer, not the deer they

shot and were tagged by another hunter. He also asks that hunters fill out their own survey cards and not give them to anyone else because they were selected for a specific reason. And finally, only fill out the information requested and be truthful in the response. Only a sample of hunters are surveyed and each response represents a number of hunters.

**For more information, contact Roberts at 515-432-2823.**

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## **DNR, HUNTERS WILLING TO HELP LANDOWNERS WITH DEER ISSUES**

CHARITON – Landowners looking to reduce the number of deer on the property but having a difficult time finding hunters should contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources wildlife depredation program. The depredation program, which is part of the wildlife bureau, has handled nearly 1,400 complaints in its eight year existence.

“The depredation program was developed to help landowners who have issues with deer and deer numbers,” said Bill Bunger, depredation biologist for the western two-thirds of Iowa. “It gets frustrating on my end when we find private landowners who do not allow deer hunting, or restrict deer hunting access to their property and complain about the deer herd. We need landowners to be good neighbors to each other and allow hunters access and harvest does.”

Bunger said the DNR has a list of hundreds of hunters who are willing to travel to shoot only does. The list is available for landowners wanting help to reduce the deer herd on their property.

“There is still time for landowners to get help this year,” Bunger said.

The late muzzleloader season and the bonus January season good opportunities for hunters to take antlerless deer. Bunger said hunters would have to harvest at least half of all the adult does on the property to actually reduce the deer population.

“Shooting bucks and a few does will not trim the population,” he said.

Call Greg Harris, depredation biologist for the eastern one-third of Iowa, at 319-330-5578 or Bill Bunger, depredation biologist for the western two-thirds of Iowa at 641-774-2958, or the local wildlife management biologist.

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## **RANGE TO OPEN FOR SPECIAL HOURS TO MEET HUNTER INTEREST**

INDIANOLA - The shooting range at Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park will be open Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate the tremendous interest by deer hunters wanting to site in their gun for the second shotgun season. Second shotgun season begins Saturday.

“The range will be open for everyone wanting to shoot, but we are primarily having the special hours on Friday for deer hunters to site in their guns,” said Rod Slings, recreation safety program supervisor for the DNR.

The range will be closed on Christmas Day. For more information, call the range at 979-5876.

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